*Synopsis*

# WOMEN WELFARE PROGRAMMES IN ANDHRA PRADESH: A STUDY IN WEST GODAVARI DISTRICT


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# Synopsis

Women constitute nearly half of the Indian population and constitutionally they enjoy equal rights and they occupy a place of primary in the national development programmes. A plethora of schemes and programmes have been announced regularly and on the face of it, everything seems set for fulfilling the aim of women's uplift and development. Yet the disconcerning finding is that the status of women in India has continued to decline and deteriorate ever since Independence. Women still remain subservient to the male persons in a patriarchal society of India and they lead a miserable life compared to their male persons in a patriarchal society of India and they lead a miserable life compared to their male counterparts, with their identity as a 'Second Sex'. Further, the rural women present a more deplorable picture than their counterparts in the urban areas, so far as their education, health, and income are concerned. Rural women in India are doubly subjugated because they are marginalizing on gender basis and also they lead a very miserable life due to abject poverty. In India, there is a great distinction between urban economy and rural economy, the latter lagging far behind the former, so far as life-style and socio-economic standards of the people is concerned.

From the very beginning of planning in India, care has been taken to promote the welfare of women as it has been realized that any welfare plan would be incomplete unless it take note of women and provide them welfare services to meet their needs. In 1955, Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister, also pointed out the need to lay stress on the improvement of conditions of women, children and the tribal people. He remarked “we talk about a welfare state and direct our energies towards its realization. Women in India have a background of history and tradition behind them, which is inspiring. It is true, however, that they have suffered much from various kinds of suppressions and all these have to go so that they can play their full part in the life of the nation. Though in the pre-independence period, social reformers like Raja Rammoham Roy, M.G. Ranade, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and many others took positive steps, through social legislation and movements, for the welfare of women in India, such efforts became more prominent with the adoption of the Constitution in 1950. The Constitution guarantees equal rights and opportunities to women in the country through a number of Articles like Art.14 (equality before law and equal protection of law), Art15(no discrimination on the grounds of sex), Art 15(1) (equality of opportunity), Art 19(certain fundamental rights to both men and women),Art25 (religious freedom to both men and women), Art(a) (right to an adequate means of livelihood), Art39(d) (equal pay for equal work both

for men and women), Art 39(e) (protection of health and strength of workers-men, women and children), Art.42 (just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief) and Art.326 (universal adult franchise).

Accordingly, laws have been made from time to time for the welfare, development and equality of women. A number of legislations have been made for women welfare, development and equality of women. A number of legislations for women welfare starting from the Special Marriage Act (1954) to the recently enacted Domestic Violence Act(2006) aim at improving the status of women. Beginning with the Fourth Plan till the end of the Tenth Plan, the Planning Commission has identified education, health, income generation, employment opportunities and capacity building of women as the major objectives of different Plans.

It can be said that most numerous and important legislation for women are made in India compared to other countries of the world. These laws are embracing in character and expected to have cast a significant influence on the women community. Apart from legislation, a plethora of women welfare schemes have been launched both at the Central and State. In spite of such efforts, a wide gap appears to exist between the intention and performance. Thought these laws and measures have given positive result in certain spheres, particularly in case of urban women, they remain only as letters on paper for the ruralite, uneducated and common class women who outnumber the former class. The concepts of

emancipation, equality and empowerment still remains a dream to be realized .Such a scenario, therefore justly evoke interest and queries in the mind of the researcher to probe into the causes thereof. It also raises doubts about the effectiveness of the women welfare programmes. Therefore hopes to examine the efficacy of women welfare programmes particularly in relation to rural women of Tanuku in West Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh.

## Problem of study

With this theoretical framework and operational conceptualizations, it has been proposed to make a study of the status of rural women in the state of Andhra Pradesh so far as their welfare is concerned. Hence the problem of this particular study concentrates upon the welfare programmes for women in the rural sector of a particular state Andhra Pradesh and find out to what extent the welfare schemes regarding welfare of women are properly implemented and are able to reap the benefits of development and welfare. We propose to concentrate on rural women as they constitute more than 80% of the total women population in India and they are considered very significant and vulnerable component of not only Indian women but also of the Indian society as a whole. Unless the welfare programmes launched by the government reaches the doorsteps of the rural women and unless they avail the benefits of these programmes, it would merely become paper works without achieving their

goals. Secondly, rural women are our focus of study because their culture is significantly different from the culture of the urban women as a result of their urban counterparts, are not in an advantageous position to reap the benefits of welfare pogrammes. The cultural gap existing between the urban and rural women work as a barrier as the benefits of the welfare programmes tricking down to the target group is concerned. If the rural women, who constitute more than two thirds of the total women population, remain deprived of the benefits of welfare programmes, such programmes then will remain confined to catering the needs of only a small section of the women in the state. Hence, the researcher, after a careful deliberation has opted to analyze the welfare programmes pertaining to women, particularly in the rural sector.

## Scope and Objectives of Study:

The core problem of the study, as has been pointed out before, deals with the welfare programmes for rural women as implemented by the government from time to time since independence. Moreover, this study concentrates upon the question as to what extent the women are really benefited and have improved their socio-economic conditions through these governmental programmes. The success of a policy or programme depends upon the extent to which the results of these programmes reach the beneficiaries. Therefore, the study is in part an evaluative study concentrating upon the success of these welfare programmes. Further,

another objective of this study is to find out the gaps between the intentions of these programmes and their real achievements through the implementation with the gaps pointed out, the researcher's interest is to find out where the defects lie in obtaining the intended results. Last but not the least, the study aims at finding out whether the women are only the beneficiaries or they have a role in the policy formulation.

In order to make the study with all the aforesaid objectives, we have selected Andhra Pradesh, a federating unit of the India Union as the geographical setting. But as it is not possible to make an empirical study of this problem throughout the rural areas of the whole state, we have selected Tanuku Municipality as the sample universe. Tanuku has been selected as the area of the study because it is the one of fast developing growing town in West Godavari District. Whatever developments, social, economic and political, have taken place in Andhra Pradesh, a major portion of this naturally goes to the people of Tanuku. Tanuku also is a block comprising of rural areas too. In order to evaluate the welfare programmes, particularly with reference to the rural women, we have taken rural women of eight villages coming under the Tanuku Block as the sample respondents of the study. These villages are Palangi, Ajram, Pydaparru, Peravali, Vundarajvaram, Komaravaram, Iragavaram and Mandapaka.

Hence, the units of analysis in this study are only the rural women of the aforesaid villages selected as sample. Though we had a mind to make this study a comparative one by making a comparison between the rural women of a coastal block and the rural women of interior tribal areas, time constraint and financial crunch prevented us from doing so. However, we do still have a mind to make a further advanced study in future.

## Hypotheses

Considering the subject matter, scope and objectives of the present study, the following hypotheses have been framed to be tested.

1. There may be a positive association between education and constitution-legal awareness.
2. There may be a close association between legal awareness and programme awareness.
3. There may be a good and healthy interaction between the government officials and rural women.
4. Panchayats, as elected bodies, are functioning properly so far as the welfare programmes for women are concerned.
5. NGOs may play an active role in implementing welfare programmes in rural areas. They may need direction and control of the state for the welfare programmes for women.

6. There may be a positive relationship between programme awareness and programme participation.
7. There may be a positive relationship between education and rising of voices to claim their share in the welfare pogrammes.

## Methods of Study

The place of methodology under any scientific research work is of vital importance because when the investigator proceeds in the path of research, she /he has to proceed through some systematic method in order to make the study, as far as possible, scientific, precise and correct. Hence, here the researcher intends to present a brief overview of the method that has been followed in the present study.

We have retrieved data from secondary sources like published and unpublished literature in the form of books and articles in the journals. Reports and governmental documents as well as leaflets and brochures were collected and studied for getting data. Primary data were collected through field survey by administering schedules to the sample respondents. The schedule was made both in English and Telugu (local language) for better understanding of the questions by the respondents. Sample selection was made from the women of eight rural areas coming under the Tanuku block. Through random sampling method, care was taken to choose the sample from various age groups, their marital status, educational status, occupational and income groups as far as possible. In

some cases, group interviews and participant observation, were also conducted by the researcher.

Responses were elicited from only the rural respondents with the help of structured schedule consisting of both closed and open-ended questions. A total number of 200 schedules were distributed, 25 schedules being distributed in each village, but only 165 response sheets in total were received, which were complete and used for analysis.

## Data Analysis

After collecting the data an elaborate code book was prepared and the entry of data was made in the code book for tabulation and analysis. Due to the heterogeneity of the answer pattern to open ended questions, only these responses which could be coded in a particular category were used as a base for computing frequency and percentage distribution of data. Simple statistics used mostly in some cases, wherever necessary correlation co-efficient and Chi-Square Tests were used to find the relationship between dependent and independent variables. Interpretation and generalization of data were made on the basis of empirical analysis. In some cases, tables presented. The univariate and bivariate frequency and percentage distribution and these are self explanatory. Measurements of independent and dependent variables are taken at the same point of time and the researcher has no control over the introduction of independent variables. The independent variables are specified like

age, education, marital status, occupation and income of the sample rural women under study.

## Field Experience:

In the beginning the researcher was faced with the difficulty in distributing the schedules to the sample respondents as they belong to different strata like age, income, education etc. some of the respondent s even hesitated to receive the schedules. However, after necessary conversation with the researcher they became convinced and friendly and showed interest in filling up the schedules. Still, some respondents did not return the filled up questionnaire and some returned those half-completed. But most of the respondents were very cooperative in answering to all the questions in the schedule. They evinced grater interest in the schedules and returned them, duly filled, in time.

The researcher found it difficult to take any systematic view of the officials as per the proposed questions for analysis. However, only casual views of the officials were stated in the dissertation.

## Scaling and Measurement of Socio-Economic Status

In this study the following variables were used to measure the socio-economic status of the sample respondents.

1. Age
2. Marital Status
3. Education

4. Occupation
5. Family income
6. Caste

Sex is not a determining variable in this study as all the respondents are women. Similarly, area has not been taken as a major determine variable in this study as the study setting is only the rural area and all the respondents belong to the rural community. Religion also was not considered as a variable as most of the respondents belong to Hinduism. Marital status, similarly, do not appear as important variable for analysis in this study but care has been taken to take sample respondents from both married and unmarried women. The number of divorcee women is too less to be used as a measurement for analysis. Hence age and education are found to be significant variables, whose influence on the dependent variables in the present study is sought to be measured. Caste has been taken as an independent variable but in the study most of the respondents, that is nearly 96%, belong to the general category as the area under study is not designated as scheduled or tribal area. Most of the questions pertaining to these variables are closed questions indicating the choices through Yes/No/ Don't Know. Some of the questions are multiple choices and scaled questions. Some questions are also filtered questions which were not asked to all the respondents but to a particular

group of sample respondents. In order to know the validity of reponses, follow-up questions were also asked to the respondents.

## Respondents' structure

As the present study is based upon an evaluation, made by the respondent women, of the welfare programmes launched by the government, it is necessary to take note of the socio-economic profile of the respondents. Social, cultural and economic factors have widely recognized as playing a significant role in determining the way in which people react to a policy of the government. Hence there is a close linkage between the socio-economic status of the people and their evaluation of the programme. In this study we have taken age, marital status, education, occupation and family income as variables of socio-economic profile of the sample respondents. The following table gives a picture of socio-economic profile of sample respondents in general.

## Plan of Study:

The study is presented in seven chapters. The first chapter is introductory and covers the statement of the problem, the need for study, objectives, methodology and sampling and also the review of literature. The second chapter attempts the concept of the Welfare State in which how Welfare State as developed from the mid-20$^{th}$ century and evaluated as essentially a new concept and called upon a modern political system.

The third chapter describes the status of Indian Women as an over view and provides a meaningful insight into the status of women. The issues that will govern the discussion in this chapter have been put into various parts. The fourth chapter discusses women welfare projects in Andhra Pradesh. The fifth chapter deals with the area under study and a profile of women. The sixth chapter presents an empirical view of welfare of rural women in selected areas in Andhra Pradesh. The seventh chapter contains the summary and conclusions.

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